

IN THE CLAIMS

1. (currently amended) An ~~apparatus~~electronically readable name tag for labeling a device, the name tag comprising:

a memory for storing a user assignable ~~network device name for labeling the device, the user assignable network device name being displayed on an exterior surface of the name tag~~apparatus; and

an interface ~~that may be connected~~for connecting the name tag to a network the device, the interface being adapted to allow the user assignable name to be visible when the name tag is connected to the device, and

wherein when the interface is connected to the ~~network device, the network device~~user assignable name is loaded read from the memory by into the network device and utilized by the network device in communications across a network.

2. (currently amended) The ~~apparatus~~name tag of claim 1, wherein the network device~~user assignable name comprises a digital representation of an alphanumeric name.~~

3. (cancelled)

4. (currently amended) The ~~apparatus~~name tag of claim 1, wherein the network device~~user assignable name comprises a digital representation of a pictorial icon.~~

5. (currently amended) The ~~apparatus~~name tag of claim 4, wherein the pictorial icon is displayed on the exterior surface of the apparatusname tag.

6. (currently amended) The ~~apparatus~~name tag of claim 1, wherein the ~~network~~-device associates the ~~network device~~user assignable name with an address on the network.

7. (currently amended) The ~~apparatus~~name tag of claim 1, wherein the memory also stores a unique identifier.

8. (currently amended) The ~~apparatus~~name tag of claim 7, wherein the unique identifier may be utilized as a network address in the network.

9. (currently amended) The ~~apparatus~~name tag of claim 7, wherein the unique identifier is obtained from communications with a remote database.

10. (currently amended) The ~~apparatus~~name tag of claim 1, wherein the device further comprising~~comprises~~ a display capable of displaying the ~~a~~ network address stored in the memory of the ~~apparatus~~name tag.

11. (currently amended) The ~~apparatus~~name tag of claim 1, wherein the interface further comprises a connector which can be plugged into an interface on the ~~network~~-device.

12. (currently amended) The ~~apparatus~~name tag of claim 11, wherein the interface on~~of~~ the ~~apparatus~~name tag is adapted to be connected to a serial interface on the ~~network~~ device.

13. (currently amended) The ~~apparatus~~name tag of claim 1, wherein the network is an Ethernet network.

14. (currently amended) A method of addressing a ~~network device~~ resident on a network, comprising:

storing a user assignable name in an electronically addressable tag;

affixing an ~~the~~ electronically addressable tag ~~storing~~ a ~~network device~~ name to a surface of the ~~network device~~ such that, the ~~network device~~ user assignable name ~~being~~ is visibly apparent on a surface of the electronically addressable tag;

establishing an electronic connection between the ~~network device~~ and the electronically addressable tag;

loading the ~~network device~~ user assignable name stored in the electronically addressable tag into the ~~network device~~ via the established electronic connection; and

configuring the ~~network device~~ to utilize the ~~network device~~ name in communications across a network.

15. (currently amended) The method of claim 14, wherein the step of configuring the ~~network device~~ further comprises the step of storing an association between the ~~network device~~ user assignable name and an network address for the ~~network device~~ in a translation table.

16. (currently amended) The method of claim 15, wherein the address for the ~~network device~~ is also stored in the electronically addressable tag.

17. (currently amended) The method of claim 14, wherein the ~~network device~~ name comprises a ~~digital representation of an~~ alphanumeric name.

18. (cancelled).

19. (currently amended) The method of claim 14, wherein the ~~network device name~~ comprises a ~~digital representation of a pictorial icon~~.

20. (cancelled).

21. (previously presented) The method of claim 14, wherein the network is an Ethernet network.

22. (currently amended) A method for use with one or more ~~addressable network devices~~ that are addressable on a network, comprising:

generating a ~~network device~~ user assignable name which may be utilized by the network devices in communications across a the network; and

storing the ~~network device~~ user assignable name in a tag as a digital representation of a pictorial icon that is displayed on the tag's exterior;

affixing the tag being adapted to be physically connected to a first ~~network device~~ from among the one or more devices such that the user assignable name is visually apparent on the first device;

downloading the ~~such that the network device~~ user assignable name from the tag to the first device through an electronic connection between the tag and first device ~~may be loaded into the first network device;~~ and

utilizing the user assignable name ~~ed~~ to configure the first ~~network device~~ for communications across the network.

23. (currently amended) The method of claim 22, wherein the ~~network device name~~ comprises a digital representation of an alphanumeric name.

24-27. (cancelled)

28. (currently amended) The ~~apparatus~~name tag of claim 1, wherein when the ~~apparatus~~name tag is physically moved and connected to another ~~network device~~ the ~~network device~~user assignable name is loaded into the another ~~network device~~ and utilized by the another ~~network device~~ in communications across the network.

29. (currently amended) The method of claim 14 further comprising:

moving the electronically addressable tag from the ~~network device~~ to another ~~network device~~

establishing an electronic connection between the another ~~network device~~ and the electronically addressable tag;

loading the ~~network device~~user assignable name stored in the electronically addressable tag into the another ~~network device~~; and

activating an address discovery process that configures the another network device to use the ~~network device~~user assignable name in communications across the network.

30. (currently amended) The method of claim 29, wherein activating further comprises associating the another ~~network device~~ with a unique identifier that identifies the another ~~network device~~ on the network.

31. (currently amended) The method of claim 22 further comprising: removing the tag from the first ~~network device~~; physically connecting the tag to a second ~~network device~~; and initiating, by the second ~~network device~~, a procedure to discover user assignable ~~network device~~ names

associated with at least a third device ~~one more~~ of the one or more addressable ~~network~~ devices connected to the network.

32. (currently amended) The method of claim 31 further comprising establishing a record that associates ~~network device~~ the user assignable names with the one or more ~~network~~ devices connected to the network.

33. (currently amended) The method of claim 31 further comprising displaying the discovered ~~network device~~ user assignable names to a user.

34. (new) An electronically readable name tag for labeling one or more addressable devices on a network, the name tag comprising:

a memory for storing a user assignable name and a unique identifier associated with a first device of the one or more addressable devices; and

a connector for removably connecting the name tag to the first device, the device being adapted to accommodate the name tag such that the user assignable name is visibly displayed when the name tag is connected to the first device, and wherein the user assignable name is read from the memory by the first device and used to configure the first device for communications over the network.

35. (new) The electronically readable name tag of claim 34, wherein the first device uses the user assignable name and unique identifier to configure the first device for communications over the network.

36. (new) The electronically readable name tag of claim 34, further comprising a second device, the name tag being removed from the first device and connected to the second device and wherein the user assignable name is read from the memory by the second device and used to configure the second device for communications over the network.